

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 10, 2011  
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### **FLU ACTIVITY REPORTED IN LINCOLN**

Two cases of flu have been confirmed in Lincoln and the number of individuals testing positive for flu is increasing. The Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department reports that within the last week, local flu activity has begun to increase. Health Director, Judith Halstead is strongly recommending that all individuals 6 months and older who have not yet obtained a 2010-2011 flu immunization, do so as soon as possible. According the Health Director, this is especially true for those at greatest risk for complications due to flu.

The current strains of flu viruses that are being seen are all covered by the 2010-2011 seasonal flu vaccine. Flu vaccination is the primary method for preventing influenza. Influenza is a highly infectious disease of the lungs. It can cause mild to severe illness and at times can lead to death. About two weeks after vaccination, antibodies develop that protect against influenza virus infection.

While everyone should get a flu vaccine each flu season, it's especially important that certain people get vaccinated either because they are at high risk of having serious flu-related complications or because they live with or care for people at high risk for developing flu-related complications. Those at high risk include:

Children younger than 5, but especially children younger than 2 years old

Adults 65 years of age and older

Pregnant women

People who have certain conditions including, asthma , neurological and neuro-developmental conditions, chronic lung disease, heart disease, blood disorders, diabetes, kidney disorders, liver disorders, metabolic disorders ,weakened immune system, people younger than 19 years of age who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy, people who are obese.

Other people for whom vaccination is especially important are:

People who live in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities

People who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from flu, including:

- Health care workers
- Household contacts of persons at high risk for complications from the flu
- Household contacts and caregivers of children younger than 5 years of age with particular emphasis on vaccinating contacts of children younger than 6 months of age (children younger than 6 months are at highest risk of flu-related complications but are too young to get vaccinated)

There is plenty of flu vaccine available and easily accessible in the community. Individuals needing a flu immunization should contact their health care provider or locate a community flu immunization location. The Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department provides flu immunizations by appointment to children and low-income uninsured adults. All children between the ages of 6 months through 18 years of age will be provided a flu vaccine as part of the Department's childhood immunization program. The Department will also provide flu vaccine to adults who are low-income and not covered by insurance, Medicare, Medicaid or other third-party payers. Appointments to obtain flu vaccine through the Lincoln-Lancaster

County Health Department can be made by calling 441-8065. The Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department is located at 3140 N Street. Vaccine appointments are available Monday through Friday.

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